

nobleman, equally concerned in bringing about the Revolution, made similar promises. In this way, they sought to hedge and to provide against the possibility of a restoration. The thing was so common that it does not place Marlborough on a sort of pinnacle of infamy. It shows he was not high-minded and had no objection to deceit. By it, he obtained a free pardon from James, and James got nothing but words in return. In a conversation about Marlborough with Charles Greville, the Duke of Wellington sums up the matter with his usual good sense. * As to his character, we must not judge of it according to the maxims by which men in our time were governed ; besides that they were less strict in his day; the condition of affairs itself produced a laxity ; and though it was true he communicated with the Pretender, and acted a double part, that was no more than many in France did in Napoleon's reign, and he told a curious anecdote of Talleyrand/ ¹

Macaulay's antipathy must have arisen from the alleged plot of Marlborough to overthrow William and put Anne on the throne in his place, in order to become himself chief director of the civil and military government. But of such a plot there is no evidence save conjecture. What Marlborough really aimed at seems to have been security in case of a counter-revolution. The facts do not warrant us in

saying more than that. But Macaulay will not hear of this simple and natural interpretation of the facts. ' His

¹ Greville's Diary, 2d Ser., ii. 193. Referring to Marlborough and Sunderland, the Duke of Wellington once said : * I never rightly understood the characters at that period or made due allowances for them until I observed the effects which the Revolution in France had produced upon the minds of their statesmen. After such movements the principles of men become relaxed. They are not then so much attached to dynasties or to principles as their successors become afterwards even to parties/ Philip Henry, 5th Earl Stanhope, Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington (1888), P. 57-